

HIGH LIGHTS



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June 1945

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HIGH LIGHTS

JUNE 1945

Volume 6 Number 6

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HIGH LIGHTS, from the foothills; issued monthly by Sierra Madre Arts Guild at the Old Erick Oven, 28 Windsor Lane, in Sierra Madre, California.

SONNET FOR THESE TIMES

Helen Ferguson Caukin

Reaper of wars! O World! were here not sown
 Solutions far more fruitful by the Past
 For your complexities? - but overstrawn
 By the preying bird a seed that rooted fast?
 Here where unpityingly the sapping waste
 Self-spread, what leaf greens for the white-winged bird?
 What peoples rinding your globe, gaunt-starved for taste
 Of freedom's flavor, chew but a bitter word?

Reaper of fertile blood and sterile tears!
 How shall we, living, harrow the stricken mind
 Of children broken across your robot years,
 How stake our scarecrow hearts for the Future's blind -
 Frighten the Future from crops that here arise,
 Lest it have stomach for like enterprise?

(The New Mexico Quarterly Review)

OF HONOLULU

Bernaby Bode

Some time ago I was invited to the engagement announcement party of a young Chinese girl whose family lives in one of the valleys back of Honolulu, where everything is lush and green with brilliant hibiscus growing wild everywhere. When we arrived, our hostess greeted us, looking very pretty in a blue linen dress. There were tables on the lawn and everyone was having buffet-style refreshments. She presented her fiance to us, and from his pronunciation, I should say he is English or Australian. Later, we met her parents. Her father is part English, part Hawaiian, but her mother is pure Chinese. The people at the party were everything, from Hawaiian to American army officers. I looked at the young couple, so evidently in love, and I could not help but think how circumscribed their lives will be. This small island is really the only place, with the exception of some other island in the Pacific, where they will be accepted. This is a sad commentary on their race and ours.

Many who come here from the mainland have no real

friendly interest in foreign countries or people, and I get very impatient with them. They have the idea that all the darker skinned people encroach upon their rights. I have heard several remark that it burns them up to see a Chinese, Japanese or Filipino drive by in a nice car. They take the attitude that the better things should be reserved for white people. They resent having to wait in line with them at theatres, restaurants, etc., and for some inexplicable reason think that they should have some kind of a priority.

The Islands are indeed a melting pot, and nationalities are very much intermarried, including the white race. As far as I have been able to ascertain, there is no social barrier, provided they have married into a similar class. Many well established families have Hawaiian, Portuguese or Chinese blood. One may see mixed couples on the street and think nothing of it. The white people here are definitely in the minority, I should say in the ratio of one to ten, service men and war workers not included. If one gets on a bus he finds himself completely surrounded by orientals.

There has been a sharp decline in the Hawaiian population, so it is said. I am sure this must be true for one seldom sees a pure-blooded Hawaiian. People who have known them say that they are a delightful people, warm-hearted, easy going, generous and hospitable to an extreme. Now and again I have seen old Hawaiian women, and I must say their faces are full of character. The true Hawaiian has a dark skin, black eyes and black, curly but not frizzy hair. The old women, usually grey-haired and dressed in Mother Hubbard gowns, radiate a most wonderful maternal kindness.

I like also to see the old Japanese mothers and grandmothers. They wear the long dress and high-necked costume which Madame Chiang Kai-Chek wears, and their faces seem to express infinite wisdom and patience.

It is quite an experience to go to a beauty parlor here. The one I go to is run and staffed by Japanese girls. Hilda, the young Japanese woman who runs it, is a lively, intelligent little character. Her husband and the husbands of all the girls in the shop are in the Service. The little operator who worked on me last time told me that she had a seven-months-old baby at home, and her husband is in Italy; but, she added, "All peoples have their troubles. You see them walking down the street and they look happy, but you never know what one has inside it."

horace

the guild mouse

i wuz in a litterary mood as i lit my pipe and so settled down 2 pursue my riting and as i took my pen in paw i glancit akrost wher rachel wuz lolling on the chast loung what i hed made for her ouden of a barrel stave. her tale wuz hanging that gracefully over the edge and the afterglow of springtime coming thru the oven door wuz karesing of her face wher her whiskers wuz of spun silver against perl grey satin. thers a picshur no artist cud paint i sed 2 myself. as i glancit away i saw her pick up a book by eddy gest and i felt as how poettree had vanished from ouden the picshur. my moqd had gone when as i shrugged my sholders refilled of my pipe and flipit the ded match in the air.

rachel layd eddy gest down and took a cigaret from ouden her mother of perl cigaret kase klickit her platinum liter and sez U no horace thers one thing i cant get thru my hed. only one my deer sez i. i gess a tuch of spring wuz still in2 my bones. so she up and snaped her tale with disgust and sed do U want 2 no what i cant get thru my hed or dont U having a meen look in2 her eyes as she flipit ashez from offen her cigaret in2 the suger bole. yes my deer sez i 2 her shoot and make it ezy on2 the draw.

Why dew folks what rite alwuz make up lies for the stories what they rite she ast as she filled up her lungs with smoke 2 blow rings arownd the kobwebs on2 the ceeling. my deer i sez U hav hit a vibrent note in my hart a bulls i in my sole as my brane is afire with filosofy on that theem i sez. what U bin doing sez she lissening 2 orsin welz or reeding them killer dillers or both. i aint bin reeding of eddy gest i sez quike like nokking of the ashez ouden of my pipe on2 the tabelkloth becoz the suger bole wuz 2 far for 2 reech. anser my questshun she sez. thers a saying what sez as how truth is stranger as ficshun, is it? yes and no i sez as truth is sumthing what happenz withouten nobodies help as it purtraies the ebb and flow of emoshuns as is. then sez rachel U cud kall the tru stories as is stories as she leenit back on2 the chaste loung ablowing smoke wrings on2 the same pore spiders web. not bad in fact vary good my deer i sez anodding of my hed and refilling my pipe. i must sea my publisher about that. hows about ficshun sez rachel? ficshun my deer i sez is the storie about the truth as it is not. horace my deer sez rachel i didnt think as how U had it in U ure wonderful she sez. truth is a story as is, she quots and ficshun is a story of the truth as it is not, end quots. its grate she sez. o its nuthing at all i sez modiste like tucking my killer diller in under neath of my tale. its just the truth i sez.

ARIA DI CAPRI - I

Edward Lloyd Voorhees

PREAMBLE: -

From the neighborly point of view, people are the most interesting creatures in the known part of our universe. By people we mean, of course, human beings. This limitation, then, rules out such near-human creatures as pixies, fairies, banshees, leprechauns, vampires (but not vamps), ghouls, gnomes, brownies, hamadryads, fauns, satyrs and your true primitive troglodyte. While all of these, we hasten to admit, have their excellent points and we would not for the world have any of them get the idea that we imply to them any lack of importance, we choose to consider here only our own mundane species, leaving those supernatural creatures for a later treatise and more expert handling. As for the so-called lower animals we shall touch upon them not at all - or only lightly and when involved with human beings; for human beings, by virtue of being more unpredictable in their ideas and conduct than are the lower animals offer much greater leeway for color, variety, and fictionizing. For man's gullibility is so great that he will believe almost anything of himself, while at the least variation in the documented conduct of the lower animals he cries "nature-faker," and writes letters to the newspapers.

Nor do we intend to write about all human beings. That, indeed, would be presumptuous, reminding us awesomely of H. G. Wells or Emil Ludwig. Instead we choose a very small segment of humanity on a very small segment of land in a very large ocean, during what - "sub species aeternitatis" - was a mere moment of time - ten years of the short breathing spell vouchsafed to mankind between World War One and World War Two. If this all sounds as scientific as a microscope, be not deceived, for in spite of the psychologists and sociologists - their measurements, norms and ponderous classifications, we remain of the firm opinion that human individuality possesses a residue of the unpredictable which defies analysis and places it in the wide biological class termed "sports" - "a sudden spontaneous deviation or variation of type; a mutation." Aye, and what a mutation is man! In short, we are presenting here a few human beings and their personalities, modes of living, and reactions to that unique aggregation of perpendicular gray and gold limestone, luxuriant vegetation, indigenous natives, fantastic clearness of atmosphere which no painter has ever been able to put upon canvas, and rarified ozone - that small jewel of earth, in short, set in a sapphire sea and known as Capri.

It is the atmosphere and light of this island that draws and often detains, fetters, and confines as by some enchantment individuals from the outside world. Many of these individuals are strange and exotic before coming to Capri; but others are commonplace persons, innocent of any impulse toward the unusual in dress, conduct, or thought - when they arrive. And then mutation sets in. The most strict and circumspect, even though he or she be an authentic aged-in-the-wood New Englander, is so startled to find himself or herself going dancing in dungarees and sandals in the evening at the Morgana, where other guests may appear in dinner gowns, black dinner jackets, or white monkey jackets; or trudging up Monte Solaro at midnight to have a picnic and watch the sun rise; or even going bathing nude among the rocks, although it is always certain that somebody somewhere on a higher level will be looking down and sure to see that which is forbidden by law.

Hence the phrase "Aria di Capri" - which the present writer filched from the title of a most amusing book by that distinguished and versatile native son of Capri (although born of an East Anglian mother), Signor Edwin Cerio, bon vivant, scholar, architect, and human being. His fifteen fantastic and true stories based upon actual individuals and odd happenings observed on Capri are irreproachable in their fidelity to the life and the peculiar metaphysics of that island - as anyone will vouch who has tarried there for more than nine days. Only Norman Douglas's "South Wind" compares to Edwin Cerio's "Aria di Capri" (inadequately translated as "That Capri Air"), and the Douglas tale is nearer to fiction and its author has declared that its setting is not precisely Capri. But Edwin Cerio's "Aria di Capri" is nowhere else. My own claim to similarity in the ensuing sketches is that these, like Signor Cerio's, are based upon personal encounters, observations, auditions and interpretations, mine own, on that same island.

RENDEZVOUS: -

The Trattoria Savoia was little more than a hole in the wall, but it was the most popular restaurant in all Capri for persons of Bohemian tastes. Its proprietor was also the cook, a fat Roman known simply as "Chef," who catered to the preferences of his favorite customers with a tenderness like that of a mother for her favorite son. And there was a wisp of a twelve-year-old waitress with sunny hair that was like a halo of cloud about her pale oval face in which her wide dream-like blue eyes and the expression

of complete detachment from what she was doing reminded one hauntingly of those virgin saints of Cimabue. When one spoke to her she was suddenly all aflutter, like a daffodil caught in a spring zephyr, which may have suggested to some one the nickname of "Frou-Frou," which fitted and stayed. A ubiquitous gray cat without a tail, and a melancholy and ploddingly conscientious German woman with loops of taffy hair who superintended the little ten by twenty dining room and made change were also a part of that indefinable atmosphere which made even the unfaithful fall into the habit of returning to the Savoia every now and then to make sure it was still all there. Just outside to the right was the resting place of the half-dozen one-horse carriages when waiting for a fare, and to the left was a lively open-air market kept by a blowsy and disheveled family of father, mother and son, who always looked as though they had been pulled up in the field with that day's turnips, but who provided the best vegetables and fruit at the best prices to be found on the island. This market was frequently raided by Frou-Frou during the dinner hour in order to procure some tidbit for a fastidious customer.

I either lunched or dined at the Savoia for weeks at a stretch in different years. In fact, so did nearly every transient on the island, as well as some of the residents. Even some of the cabmen, and the ancient who collected the fifteen centimes for the rent of a chair in the Piazza could sometimes be seen there having a bowl of the Chef's potent soup before the Signori arrived. The tables were close together, and the atmosphere in general was favorable to striking up acquaintances if one was so inclined. And one was likely too to meet the friends of one's friends there. Some of these encounters proved interesting to the writer and may prove likewise to the reader of the next installment of "Aria di Capri."

TO BE CONTINUED

REMEMBER: -

Unless otherwise notified, the Guild meets regularly at 8:30 p.m. on the first Friday evening of each month. The place is the Old Brick Oven, at 28 Windsor Lane, Sierra Madre.

GUILD MEETINGS

We are very fortunate in having Miss Elston Glenn as our speaker for the June meeting of the Guild to be held on Friday evening, June 1, at the regular time and place.

Miss Glenn is thoroughly familiar with art from every angle. She has lived in California since childhood, attended the University of Southern California and the University of California at Los Angeles, and took most of her art work under the well-known S. MacDonald Wright. She has spent a number of her vacations taking seminars in art in Mexico City and at Stanford University.

At one time she was a teacher of art in the Sierra Madre schools. This was when there were but four teachers here, and the present school building had not been built. At present she is Assistant Supervisor of Art in the Pasadena City Schools.

We are sure that the Guild members and their many friends will all enjoy hearing Miss Glenn speak on her favorite subject, "Why Art?"

In addition to the above question which Miss Glenn no doubt will attempt to answer, Alfred Dewey suggests a number of other questions which he hopes may be answered at this time: Why do artists paint pictures? Why do the laymen always think they know what's wrong with a picture? Why do people gloat over the fact that they have an uncle or aunt that paints "pretty" pictures? Why does art have a place in the world?

The May meeting of the Guild was one given over to an exhibition of art work by soldier artists in the field. Among the works shown were about two dozen watercolors by Pfc. Bernard Wynne of scenes from New Britain and Dutch New Guinea, a dozen pen-and-ink sketches by Pfc. Howard Morgridge of scenes from Leyte of the Philippines, and a collection of photographs of army life by Joseph Hinojos, formerly in active service with the Army.

In addition to this exhibition, there was to have been a musical program by a string quartette. Unfortunately however, Evelin Fancher, who was to have taken part, became ill and the program had to be omitted. It is hoped that at some later time this quartette may be heard. In the early days of the Guild, this quartette, consisting of Paul Fancher, Evelin Fancher, H. Ingraham and Grant Phillips, was a part of the original Jascha Gogna Orchestra.

THE KING WHO WANTED NOTHING AND GOT IT

When the world was young there was a certain king, then well advanced in years, who, ruling over a peaceful and fruitful kingdom, had never been in need of anything and had always lived such a happy life that he had come to feel that life is surely very good, holding nothing at all to disquiet him but a vague realization of the passing of the years. Yes, it was very good to be alive, he often mused, to behold his sons and his daughters slowly rise about him like new luminaries added to the heavens of his expanding days, and to watch his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren, one by one, peep shyly forth like the twinkling stars in the far, imponderable reaches of the skies of his deepening age.

From his birth always a very pious soul, the king delighted to express his happiness in life by constantly building beautiful temples to the gods. Temple after lovely temple of Parian marble he erected upon the hills; yet, never once, did he ask the gods for a thing.

This sort of thing went on for a long time until the gods, at first highly flattered, then simply amused, became at length very curious. "Now you can't tell me," said Zeus to Hermes one day, "that that old fellow doesn't want something or other. They all want something. For goodness' sake, go down there and find out what it is. I can't stand this suspense any longer. And you may grant him any three requests he may make of you, for certainly such piety should be rewarded."

When Hermes had appeared before him, broaching this fair offer of the three requests, the king was greatly pleased, although at the moment there didn't seem to be a thing in all the world that he really wanted. After a bit, however, it occurred to him that he was getting to be fairly old. It would be rather nice, he thought, if this god were to renew his strength, restore his failing eyesight and give him a new set of teeth so that he might eat something besides his gruel. He was just about to ask for these things as his three wishes when avarice suddenly stepped in and got the better of him. After all, he thought, why should I ask for these trifles? If I play my hand right, and while the gods are giving things away, I can get all of these and a lot more. At length, then, after some further reflection, he spoke aloud: "My wants are simple and few. But since you are so very generous, these are my three wishes: that I may live forever, that I may be eternally young and that I may be the wealthiest man in the world."

At this over-large order, Hermes was hard put to it for a moment to catch his breath. "Indeed, my friend," he protested; "if these wants be simple, what would you consider complex? I had really hoped for something much better than this from the wisdom that ought to accompany your age."

"Well," said the king, "after all, this offer was altogether your idea; and, if I may say so, it seems to me now that, since I have asked for something really worth while, you are getting ready to hedge around to renege."

"Why, you ridiculous old jackass!" Hermes exploded. "I'm merely trying to save you from the pitfalls of your own folly. Have you ever given any thought as to how utterly tragic a figure you might cut if these wishes were to be granted? Of course, if you insist, I shall keep to my word, but I hope that you will reconsider. For one thing, while asking for continuous life, you have neglected to ask for continuous health. Without it, you might very conceivably spend your endless life in a wheel chair or even flat on your back with nothing to amuse you, very likely, but a future contrivance called a 'radio,' doomed to listen perhaps throughout eternity to nothing so merry as a jazz band or a jive orchestra, interrupted at fifteen minute intervals by a moronic Mother Goose rhyme set to a doggerel tune or a jangle of noise. To be sure, you might always seek relief from this by twiddling the dials; but, if you were to do so, sooner or later you must surely run into the sepulchral voice of a news undertaker putting the press to bed, a kind of cross between Cassandra on the battlements and a harpy at the feast."

"I begin to see what you mean," said the king.

"And then," Hermes continued; "as time goes on, your little kingdom must certainly be drawn out of its now quiet isolation into the maelstrom of the nations. Competitions, rivalries and strifes of a hundred kinds must creep in, and there will surely be wars and politicians. Presupposing good health, as a continuously young man, perennially in 1 A, you may confidently look forward to being drafted into the army at least once in every twenty-five years for the rest of eternity; while, in between times, cut off from the company of the sages with never a serious thought to your head, you will be left to consort with overage boys in hopped-up jalopies and with screaming grey-haired girls in bobby sox and slave bracelets, swooning over the Great Voice. Can you look forward for long with equanimity to such an existence?"

"Shall we pass over this little folly also?" queried the king.

"Very well," said Hermes. "But now consider yourself as a man of wealth. Can you even guess what the future may have in store for you? It will certainly not be long before you are everywhere marked as a bloated capitalist and are stigmatized, whether rightly or wrongly, as a despoiler of the masses, an exploiter of the classes and a predatory enemy of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat and all the down-trodden of the earth making their fortunes in the shipyards and the war-time industries. Laws and troubles will surely pile up against you. Your days will be spent in dodging automobile and bond salesmen, insurance and real estate agents, and a thousand and one high pressure promoters and blue-sky slickers; while your nights will be given over to worry, your spirits rising and sinking with the vagaries of the stock exchange and the fluctuations of the dollar, the pound sterling and the franc. Eventually, all of your gold will be taken away from you to be locked up in Fort Knox and you be reduced to a pitiable state, hobbling about on crutches of paper currency bolstered with a little silver change. And then, there will be other calamities. Have you ever heard of the Income Tax? No, of course you haven't because it hasn't been thought up yet, but it's coming."

And immediately thereafter, whether due to foreknowledge or downright invention it is now too late to ascertain, Hermes fell into a visionary trance when, like a magician, he began pulling from the empty air Forms 1040, 1040 A, B and F, 1040 E.S., Schedule B (540), 1041, 1065, and all intermediary forms up to 1960 and beyond, together with instruction sheets, work sheets, alternatives and a great host of others, which he spread out like a snowstorm before the astonished king, explaining that, before the Ides of every March, they must all be completely interlined and embellished with elegant figures to the last digit and the last decimal point.

"Are you meaning to tell me," asked the king with some show of trepidation, "that I will have to fill out all these forms every year?"

"Every year," replied Hermes. "They are bound to bloom every spring with the flowers. But they will never bore you altogether with their monotony for, in their perpetual variety, they will never be twice the same."

And he continued his explanation by attempting a show of how this filling-out process might very possibly be

done, with the aid of an abacus, a slide rule, the differential calculus and a table of logarithms, provided one got started early enough the preceding year; but, though he was an omniscient god, it was soon evident that he was no more expert in these matters than the sharpest of the traditional Philadelphia lawyers. It was no time at all before he was tightly tangled up in a traffic snarl between the Gross Income from Fiduciaries (Schedule E), the Net Summary of Capital Gains and Losses (Schedule D), the Surtax with Explanation for Deductions (See Instruction Sheet, Line 7), and the Adjusted Irreducible Income with Alternative Tax Computation (See Work Sheet B, or is it C?). Pretty soon he was just running around blindly in a cul-de-sac.

"Stop!" suddenly shouted the king all in a visible ferment and agitation. "For heaven's sake, throw this truck away. I can't stand any more of it. This is the most god-awful thing I've ever heard of. I begin to see now that this world is soon to become a most terrifying place in which to live, and I marvel how I have managed to survive so long without meeting adversity. May I be permitted to alter my former requests?"

"Certainly," replied Hermes. "Nothing is final as yet. What is it that you have in mind now?"

"I would like to substitute three other wishes for those I have made," said the king; "and my substitutes are these: that I may die while I am still happy, that in my burial the customary pennies over my eyes may be dispensed with so that I need never again look at any more money even through my dead eyelids, and that I be buried so deeply and in such an inaccessible spot that no tax assessor is ever likely to dig me up."

"Granted," cried Hermes; "for at last indeed you have chosen wisely."

And it was even so.

Moral: Blessed be nothing, until you ask for it, and then it comes down upon your head like stones out of heaven.

L. B. W.

BUY ANOTHER WAR BOND AND MAKE THIS ROUND THE LUCKY
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